



CHILDREN AND ART

THE TOLEDO MUSEUM OF ART MUSEUM NEWS



CHILDREN AND ART

Toledo's Museum, which since 1903 has offered free art classes for children, is an acknowledged pioneer and an international leader in the field of art education for children. How do children see works of art in the Art Museum and how do they express themselves in a visual medium? That is the subject of this publication.

Young children do not usually want to copy the objects they see, but prefer to interpret them in their own way. Each drawing is therefore different because the child describes visually what is of primary interest to him. By juxtaposing a photograph of the art object with several interpretations by different children, the creativity of each child's interpretation is readily apparent.

Few of these drawings were made directly in front of the work of art. Most were done from memory in the schoolroom after a Museum visit—or in the Museum's studio-classrooms on Saturdays. In all cases, the child was invited to express his own interpretation. How well these young artists succeeded is apparent in the variety, individuality and creativity of these interpretations of the same object.

Visitors are cordially invited to witness these young artists on any Saturday of the school year at the Museum. Approximately 2,500 children participate in the Museum's free art classes each Saturday as part of the large five-year graded program which has received international acclaim.

Otto Wittmann, Director

Cover: Figure of a lion from Millefleurs Tapestry as interpreted by a ten year old in the Museum's Saturday classes for children.

Opposite: The Museum receives many letters from school children, such as this from a first grade class.

The Art Museum

Today we went to the Art Museum. We looked around. We saw sculpture. It was pretty. We saw mummies. We liked the way it was wrapped up. We saw a big punch bowl. The design was pretty. It looked like a tulip. The helmet was used for parades. It was made out of silver. The design was flowers. They were made of gold. We want to go again.

CHILDREN AND THE COLLECTION

In Toledo the Art Museum means children. Children have always been actively involved in the daily activities of the Museum. Almost half of those visiting the Museum each year are children. They come often during their school years and many Toledoans remember fondly the adventure of a museum visit.

To most of the world outside the immediate area of Toledo, the Museum is a great collection of works of art. The Museum is internationally admired for the superb quality of the collection and the intelligent and attractive way in which the works of art are displayed.

The educational program of a museum is unique in that it revolves around original works of art. Learning to look intelligently at these original objects gives young people a new way to understand the past and the present. History becomes real before an original work of art.

Many students have their first experiences with works of art while visiting the Museum with their classroom instructor or as students in the Saturday children's program. First grade students compare the Museum with other public buildings to find out what is different about a museum. It is difficult for young children, and sometimes adults, to comprehend that everything in the Museum is an original work of art, perhaps centuries old.

First graders look at the great punch bowl made in Toledo, Ohio, by the Libbey Glass Company and cut by John Rufus Denman. The idea that something made in Toledo, Ohio is in the Art Museum seems natural to the young. An Egyptian mummy is something very different. It seems to belong more to the world of fantasy than to the real world. The mummy is appealing to the young because it confirms so many things they have heard or read but did not believe.

During their second Museum visit, first graders learn how to look at paintings and sculpture. They study how an artist puts a painting together and how he gets his ideas from his imagination and from real life. They also look at sculpture, which for many young people is a new word.

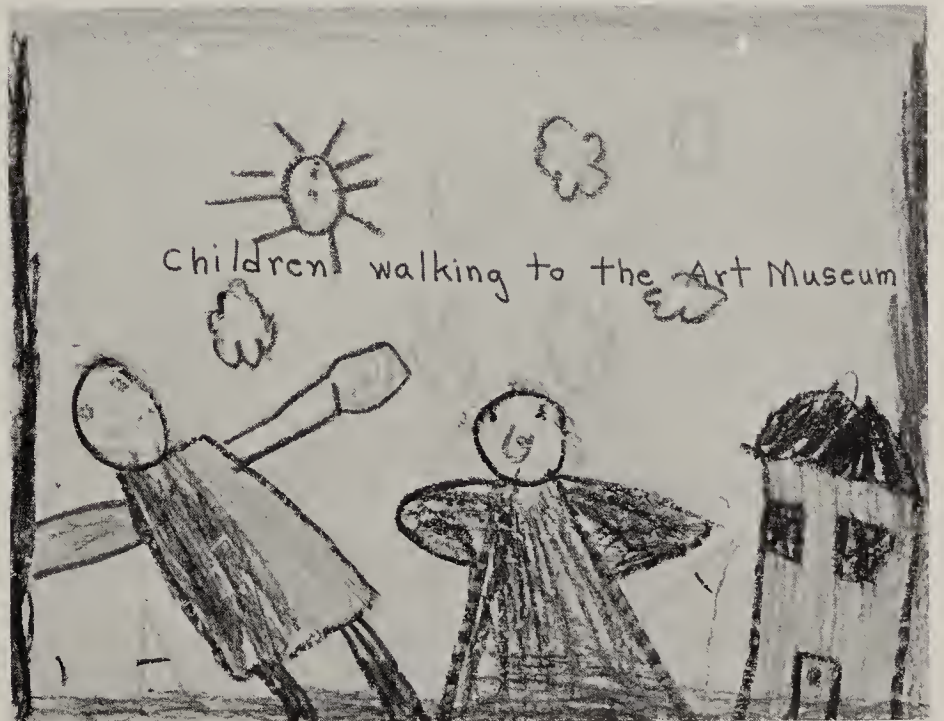
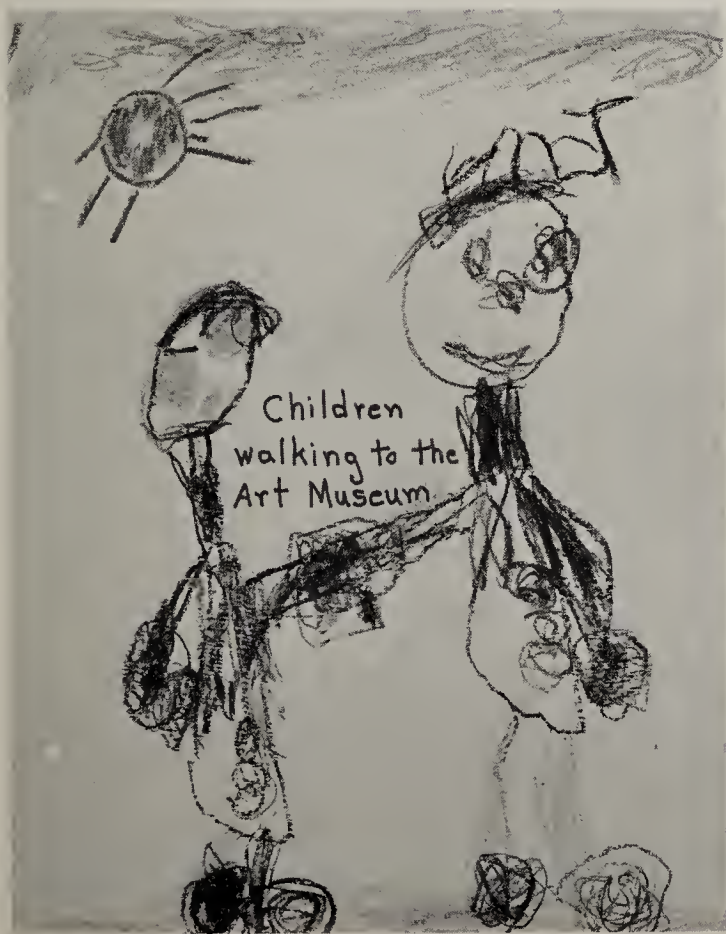
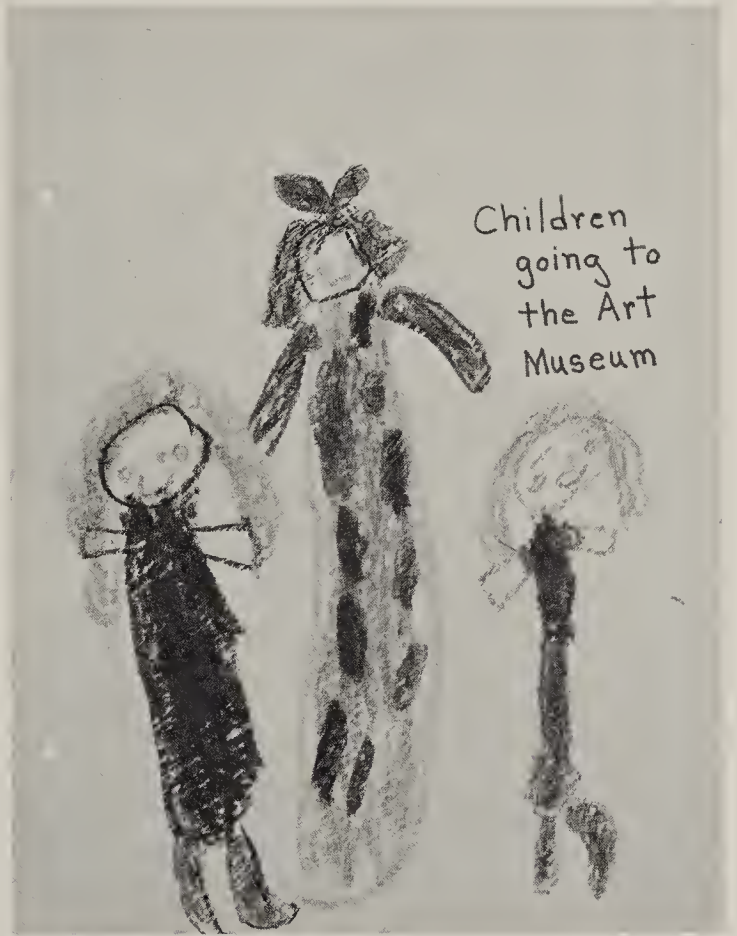
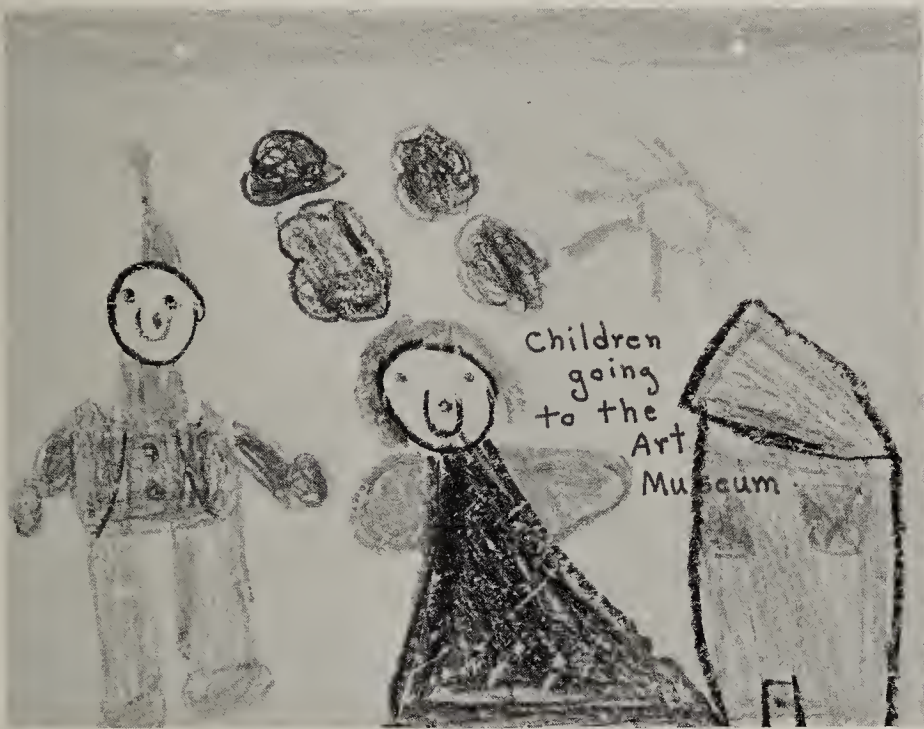
They learn that sculpture is made of different materials; stone, clay, wood, metal. And they know that they can move around sculpture and see it from many sides.

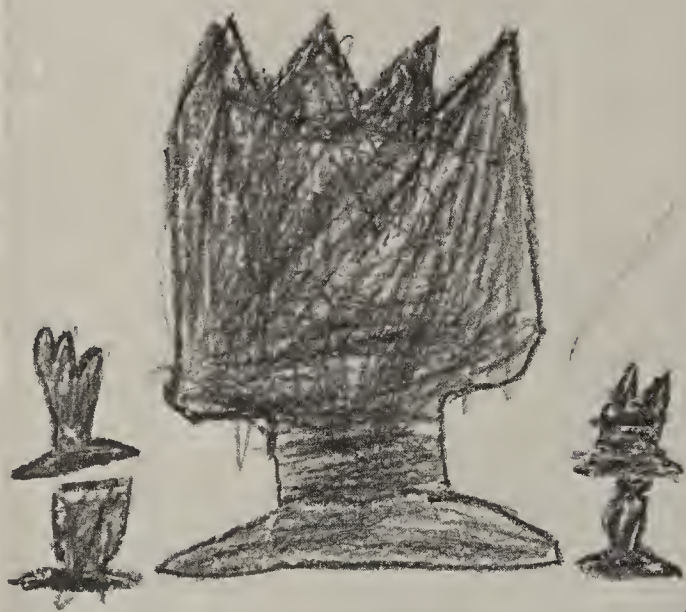
Students often continue in their classrooms discussion of their museum visits. Many times they send letters and drawings to the Museum describing their favorite objects of art.

On the pages that follow, are some interpretations of art in Toledo's Museum done by young people based upon their memory. Children often have the ability to concentrate experience and distill an event to its essence. Their memory retains an overall impression focusing on what seems most essential to them.

Come now into that marvelous world of childhood and look with fresh eyes at the museum's collection.

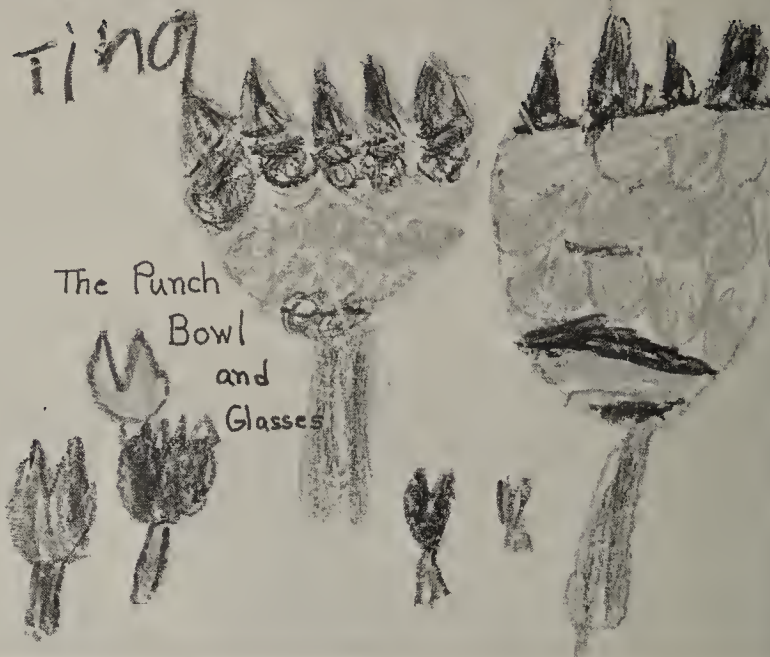




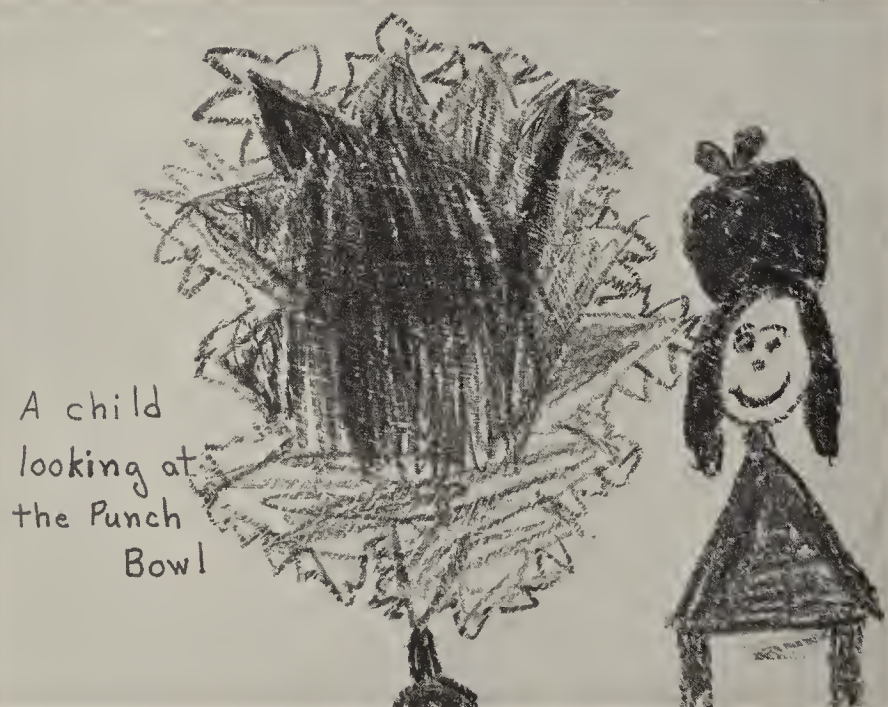


The Punch Bowl
and Glasses

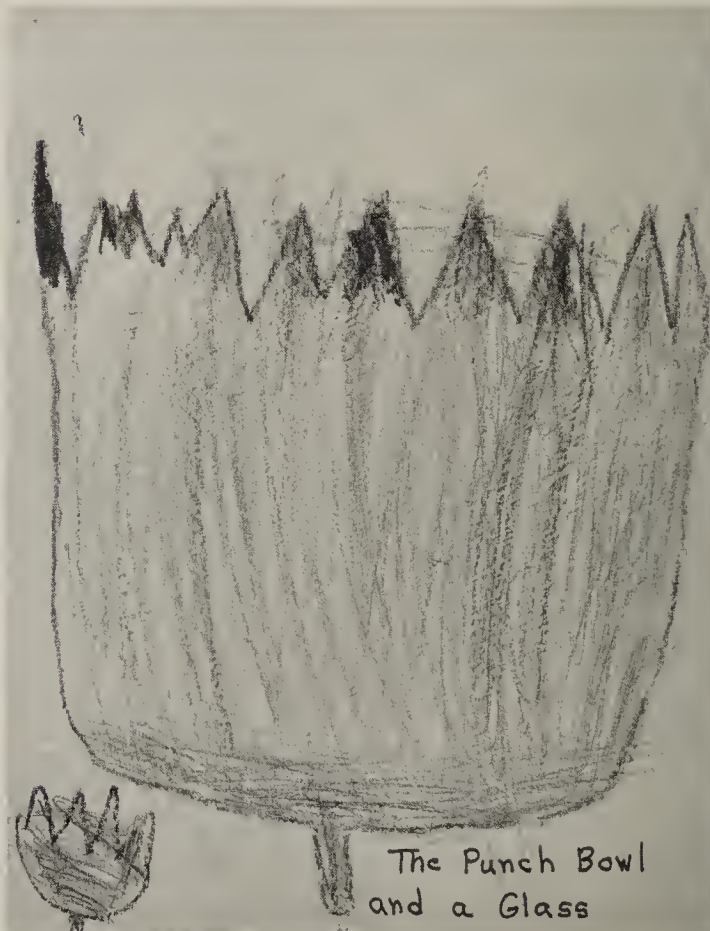
Tina



The Punch
Bowl
and
Glasses



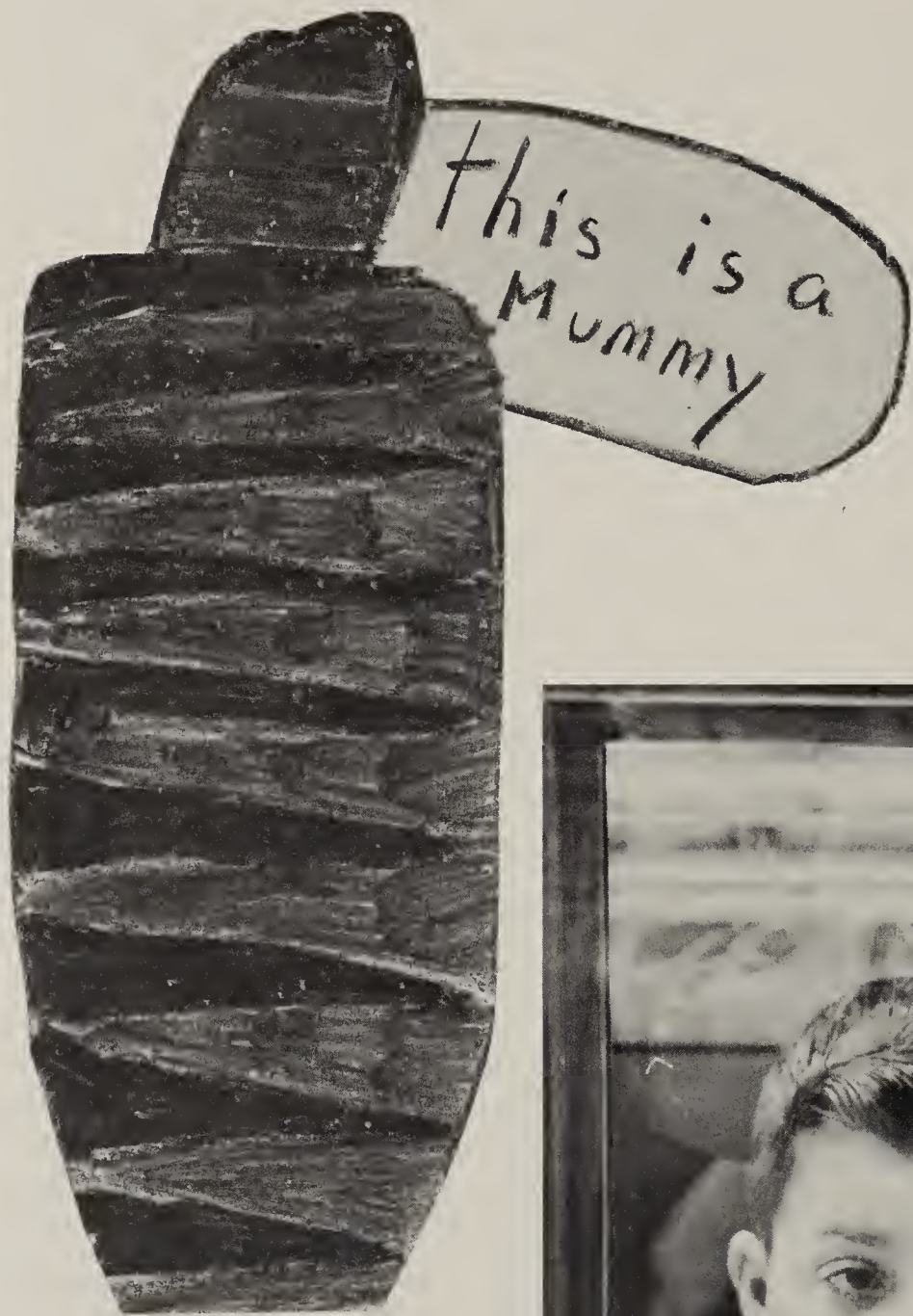
A child
looking at
the Punch
Bowl



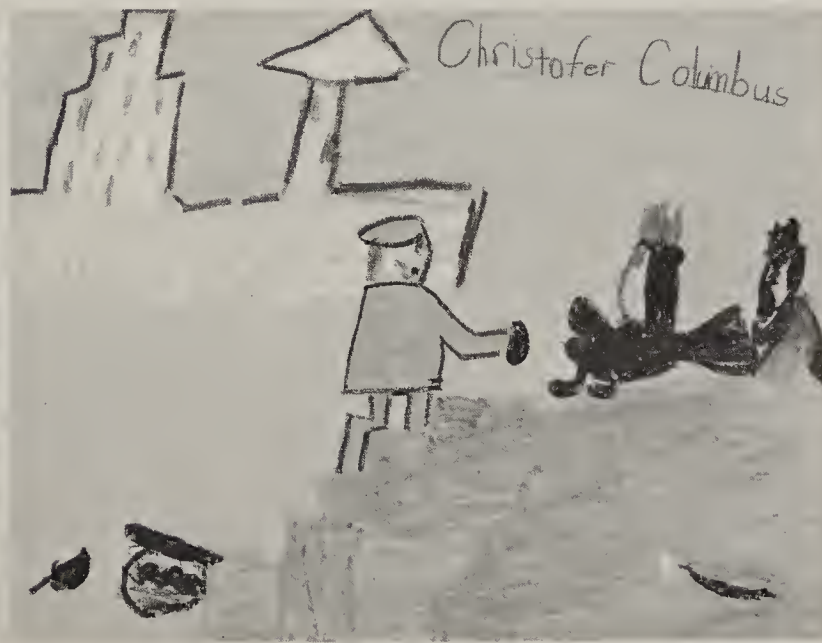
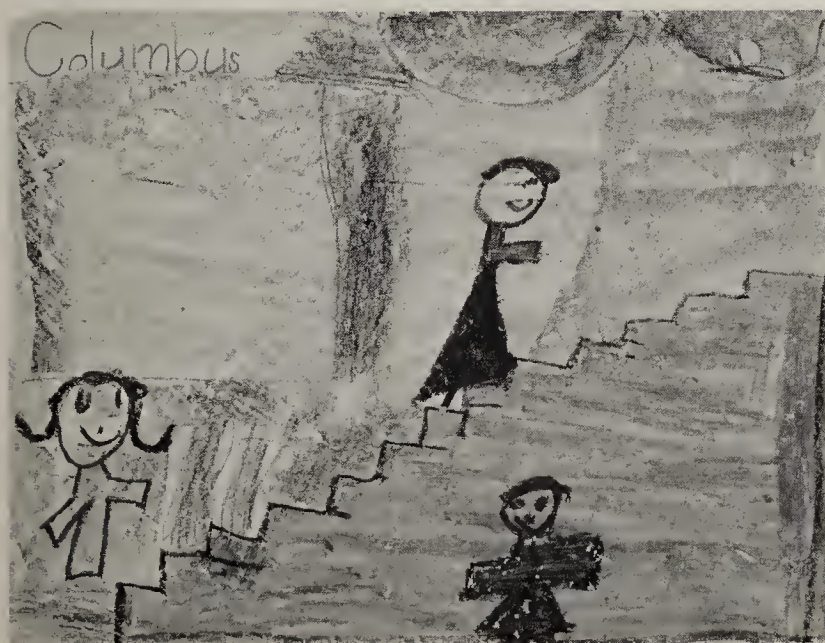
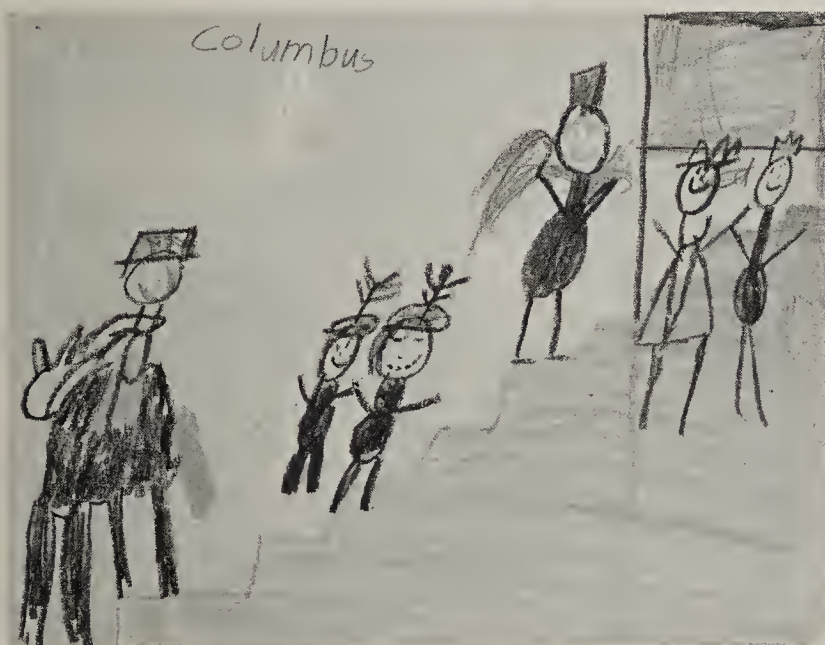
The Punch Bowl
and a Glass

The Libbey Punch Bowl
Cut by John Rufus Denman
Libbey Glass Company
Toledo, Ohio. American, 1903





Eugene Delacroix, 1798-1863, French
The Return of Christopher Columbus





French painter, unknown. 1480-90
St. George and the Dragon.



CHILDREN LOOK AT ART



Remembering the form and appearance of three dimensional objects is quite different from remembering a painting for young children. The Libbey punch bowl is massive in size and sparkles. The cut glass edge of the bowl is distinct although the overall cut glass pattern is too elaborate to duplicate from memory. The mummy becomes one large form with a bold decoration.

The composition of *The Return of Christopher Columbus* is more complex but each child clearly retains the importance of the steps. *St. George and the Dragon* contains many subjects of interest to children: St. George, and his horse, the dragon, the fair maiden, the castles and onlookers. The relationship of these elements shifts in each child's mind and different elements gain in importance,

but all children retain the basic essence of the event. *St. Jerome in the Wilderness* is a complicated painting, pre-occupied with a sense of space. The young child retains an impression of scale and basic composition but reduces the many linear patterns in the landscape to a series of simple ellipses. The ability of the young child to simplify such a composition and retain the overall image underscores the clarity with which children perceive their world.

Gentile Bellini, 1429-1507, Italian
St. Jerome in the Wilderness, 1460-70



SATURDAYS CHILDREN

The Museum's Saturday Program for children is world famous. Children are brought together from the entire city to work creatively. Every school in the city and area has a chance to participate. Children enter the program through recommendation of their third grade school teacher and principal or by placing their names on a waiting list during the initial registration day. Museum membership contributions help support the Saturday program. No tuition is charged. Classes meet for one and a half hours each Saturday for thirty weeks. Classes are planned as a five year program.

Classes in the second through fifth year of this program rotate every ten weeks to a different instructor. Some instructors conduct classes in the

galleries bringing children into close contact with original works of art. Children do not copy works of art but use the collection as a source of inspiration to perceive the world and discover for themselves.

The English chandelier was a source of study for fourth graders. These children observed the chandelier in the gallery as it hung high above their heads. The Dutch cabinet organ is an impressive musical instrument. The various patterns of the keys and pipes fascinate children.

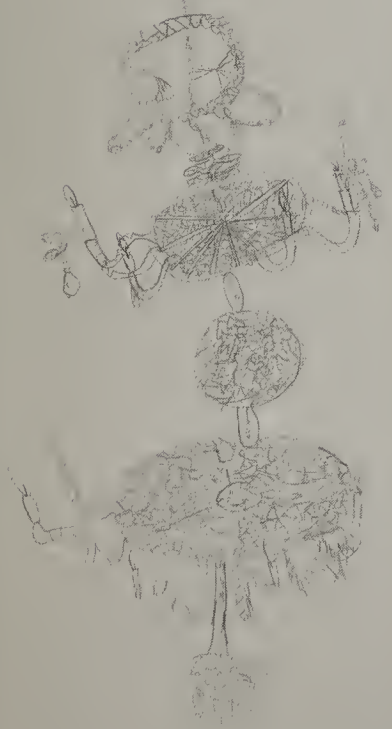
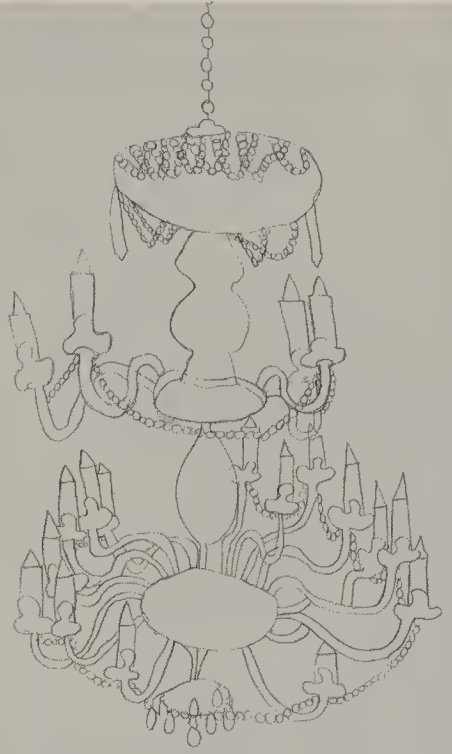
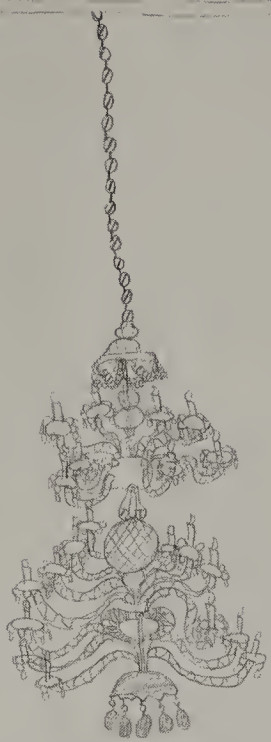
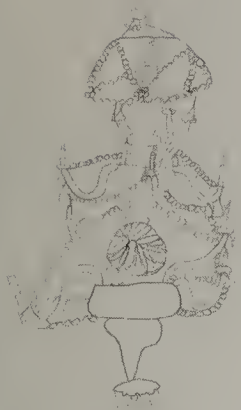
The Millefleurs tapestry holds many surprises for children as they draw in a stitch-like style seeking out small sections. There are many little details to delight the eye.

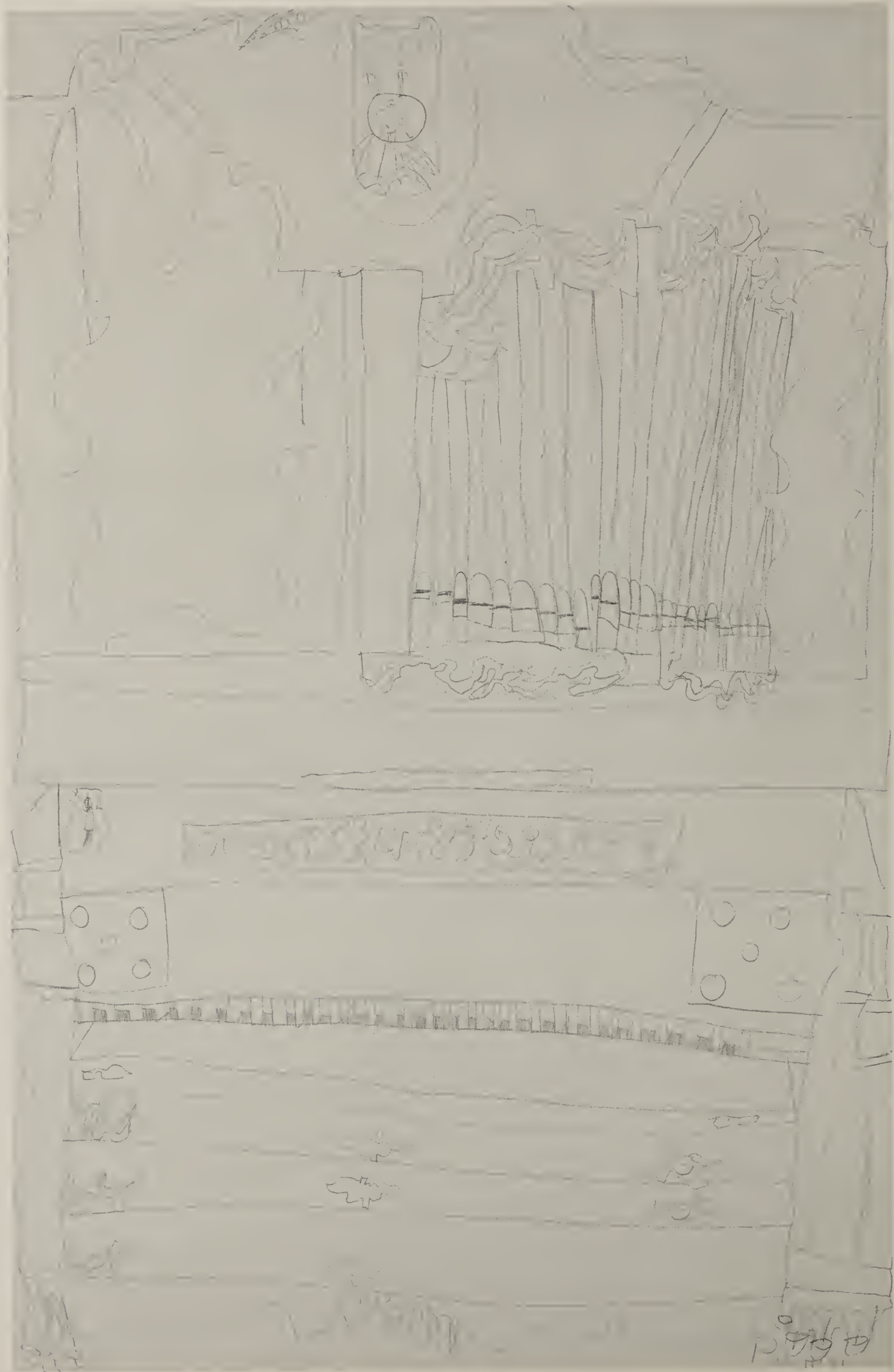






Children look up in wonder at the Museum's English 18th century chandelier. Each interprets it in his own way.







*Cabinet Organ, Dutch, 1785
Johannes Strümpfler (1750-1795)*

The statue that I
liked was a
mother holding a
baby in her
arms. Joey



*Virgin and Child, French, 1500
School of Troyes*



